United States Patent [19]

Barnum et al.

[11] **3,791,651**

[45] **Feb. 12, 1974**

[54] **CARD HOLDER**

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[22] Filed: **July 13, 1972**

[21] Appl. No.: **271,383**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **273/150,** 40/124.2, 248/456

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63f 1/10**

[58] **Field of Search** . 273/150; 40/11 R, 124, 124.2; 211/42, 43, 45; 248/453, 454, 455, 456, 457

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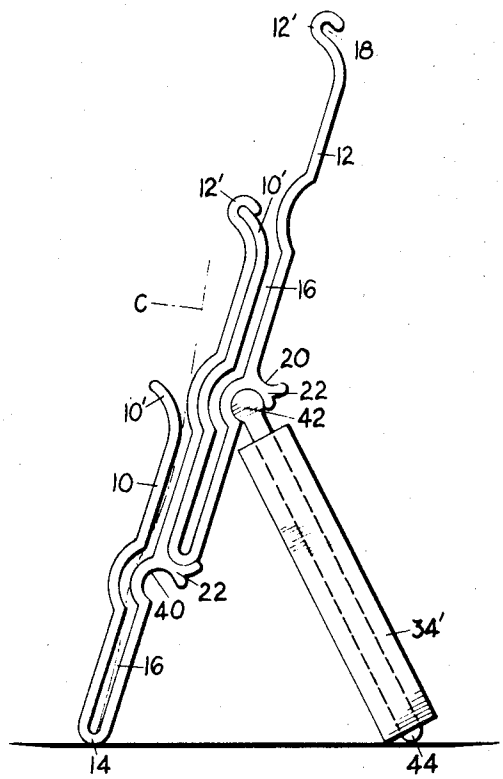
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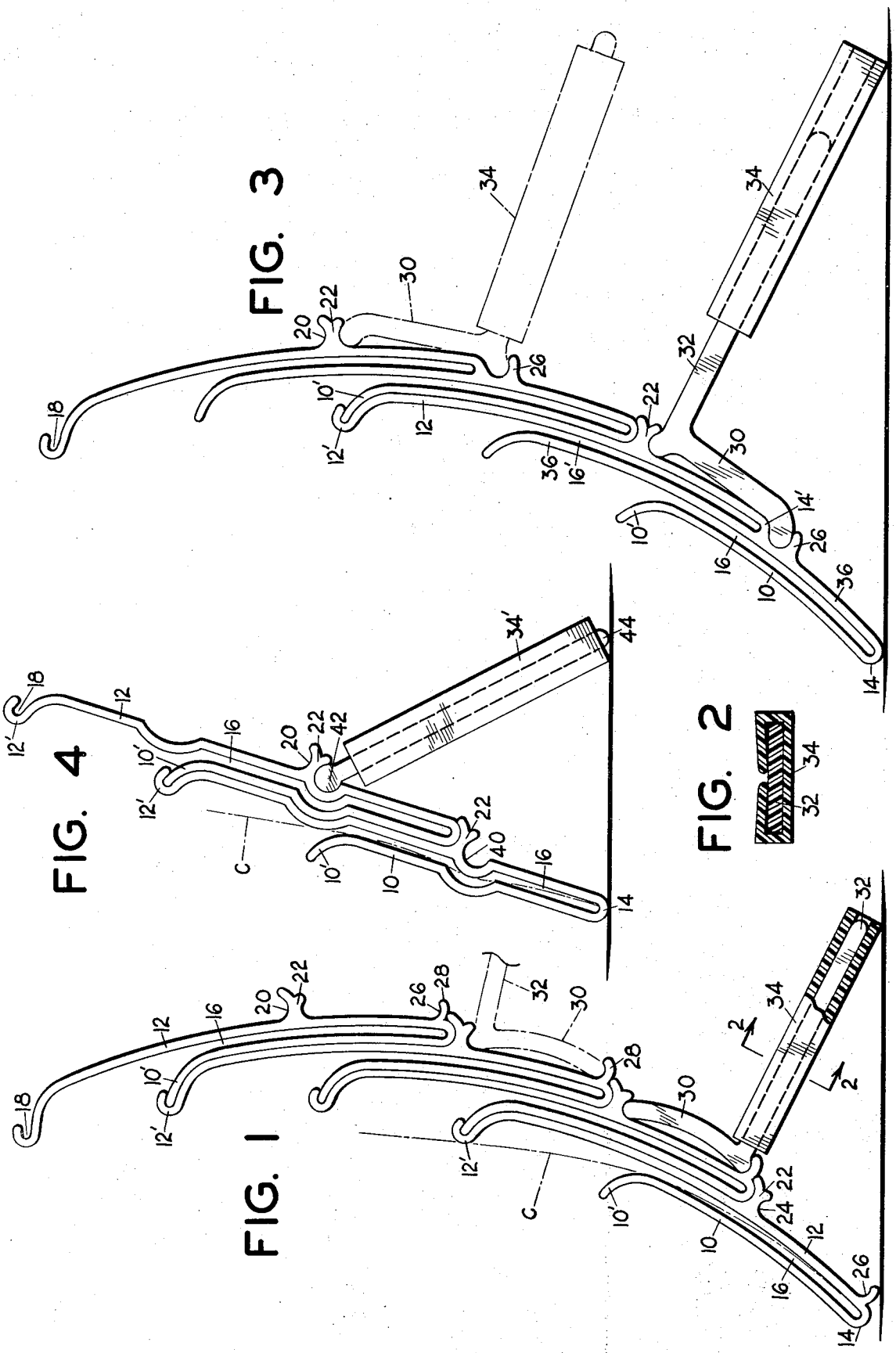
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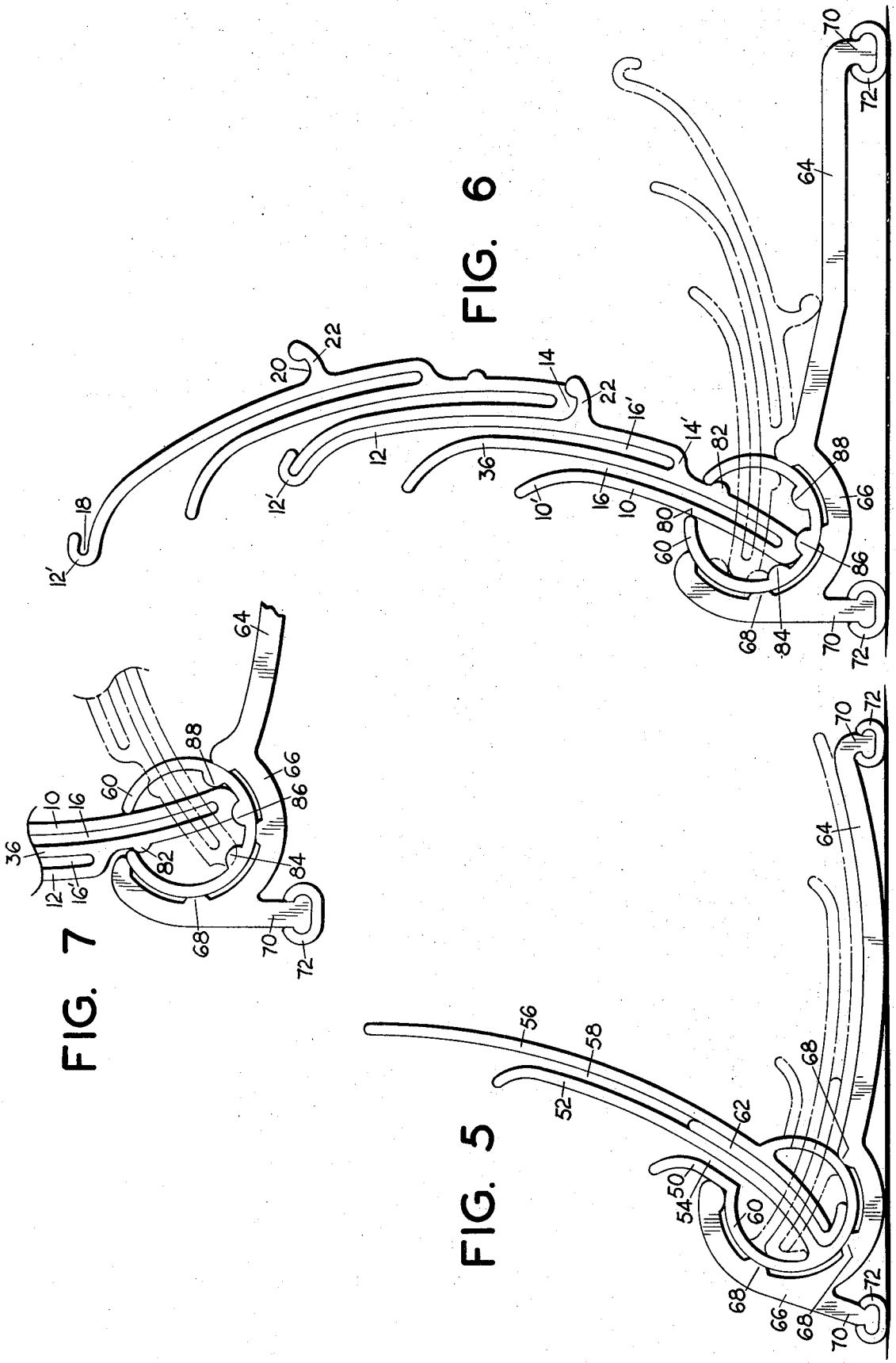
[57] **ABSTRACT**

A holder for displaying playing cards, greeting cards and the like includes interconnected front and back curved plates spaced apart to provide a curved card-retaining slot which functions to bend the cards sufficiently to retain them in the slot by frictional engagement with the plates. The front plate is shorter than the back plate to allow the cards to extend upwardly beyond the front plate for viewing. The holder is provided with spaced sockets on its rearward side for interconnection of a plurality of holders to provide a composite assembly. The holder is supported by a support which, in one embodiment, is a brace extending rearwardly of the holder and, in a second embodiment, is a base mounting the holder for pivotal adjustment between upright and collapsed positions.

11 Claims, 7 Drawing Figures




FIG. 3
FIG. 4
FIG. 2
FIG. 1


FIG. 5
FIG. 6
FIG. 7

CARD HOLDER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to card holders, and more particularly to a novel card holder of versatile utility.

Card holders provided heretofore are of two types. In one type cards are retained freely in pockets. Although this type is suitable for use indoors for the display of greeting cards and the like, it is not suitable for use out of doors for the display of playing cards since the latter are removed from the pockets too easily under the influence of winds.

A second type of card holder provided heretofore utilizes resilient clips which function to secure cards frictionally in retaining pockets. If more than one card is retained in the pocket, it is difficult to remove one without removing several. Further, the degree of friction provided by the clip is such that the attempt to extract a card from the pocket results in lifting the entire holder.

Both of the aforementioned types of prior card holders also suffer the restriction of displaying the cards in a single fixed position. Although this may be suitable for the display of greeting cards and the like, it does not afford the advantage to card players of enabling the support of playing cards at various angles between fully exposed and fully concealed positions.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In its basic concept this invention provides a card holder in which cards are retained in curved slots frictionally by slight bending of the cards.

It is by virtue of the foregoing basic concept that the principal objective of this invention is achieved; namely, to overcome the aforementioned disadvantages and limitations of prior card holders.

Another important object of this invention is the provision of a card holder construction enabling the interconnection of a plurality of holders to provide a composite assembly.

Still another important object of this invention is the provision of a card holder having support means by which the angle of card display may be adjusted over a relatively wide range.

A further important object of this invention is the provision of a card holder of the class described which is of simplified construction for economical manufacture.

The foregoing and other objects and advantages of this invention will appear from the following detailed description, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings of preferred embodiments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a view in side elevation of a card holder assembly embodying the features of this invention.

FIG. 2 is a sectional view taken on the line 2—2 in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a view in side elevation of a second form of card holder assembly embodying the features of this invention.

FIG. 4 is a view in side elevation of a third form of card holder assembly embodying the features of this invention.

FIG. 5 is a view in side elevation of a fourth form of card holder embodying the features of this invention, the card holder component being shown in broken lines in fully collapsed condition.

FIG. 6 is a view in side elevation of a fifth form of card holder assembly embodying the features of this invention.

FIG. 7 is a fragmentary view in side elevation of the card holder assembly of FIG. 6 with the card holder component mounted in reverse position.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring first to FIG. 1 of the drawings, the card holder assembly illustrated is formed of a plurality of card-retaining modules. Each module includes a curved front plate **10** and a curved back plate **12** joined together at their bottom ends by a curved connecting portion **14** and spaced apart to define between them a curved card-retaining slot **16.**

The curved slot defined by the front and back plates functions to frictionally retain one or more cards. The card C, indicated by the broken line, is seated at its lower end in the bottom of the slot and then curves arcuately upward in frictional bearing contact with the confronting faces of the front and back plates. The degree of friction thus afforded by the slight bending of the cards is sufficient to retain the latter in the slot against displacement or removal by such external forces as wind. The holder thus provides effective means for holding playing cards on a table out of doors. The degree of friction afforded by the slight bending of the cards also permits extraction of a card from the slot without simultaneous removal of other cards retained in the same slot.

The front plate is shorter than the back plate and terminates at its upper end in a forwardly curved section **10'**. The upper portion of the back plate also curves forwardly and terminates in a reversely curved section **12'** which forms a rearwardly facing notch **18.** This notch functions to receive the upper curved end section **10'** of the front plate of a second module, with the bottom curved connecting portion **14** being received with a snap fit in a correspondingly arcuate socket **20** provided in a projection **22** extending rearwardly from the back plate **12.** In this manner a plurality of modules may be connected together to form a composite assembly providing a plurality of slots **16** for the reception of cards.

Means is provided for supporting a single module or assembly in card displaying position. To this end there is provided on the back plate **12** a pair of vertically spaced, arcuate sockets **24** and **26** provided in the projections **22** and **28** and arranged for the removable reception, by a snap fit, of the opposite ends of the connector section **30** of a brace **32.** The brace projects rearwardly from the connector section for engagement of its rearward end on a table top or other supporting structure. In the preferred embodiment illustrated, the brace is rendered extensible by means of an extension sleeve **34** which surrounds and frictionally grips the brace.

It is to be noted in FIG. **1** that the supporting brace may be connected to any one of the modules of the assembly and, further, is reversible, as illustrated in broken lines, to vary the display angle of the card-retaining assembly.

The assembly illustrated in FIG. **1** provides four card-retaining slots **16.** This assembly is admirably suited for

the display of playing cards for such games as bridge. Each slot may serve to support the cards of a desired suit, the holder being of sufficient width to accommodate the cards of each suit.

The embodiment illustrated in FIG. **3** is similar to that of FIG. **1**, with the exception that each module includes two curved card-retaining slots **16** and **16'**. To this end each module includes a front plate **10**, an intermediate plate **36** and a back plate **12**. The front plate and intermediate plate are joined together at their bottom ends by the connecting portion **14**, and the bottom end of the back plate **12** is joined to the intermediate plate upwardly of the bottom end of the latter by the connecting portion **14'**. The bottom end of the rear slot **16'** thus is located above the bottom end of the front slot **16**, so that a card positioned in the rear slot projects vertically above a card located in the front slot.

FIG. **3** illustrates two of the modules interconnected in manner similar to the interconnection of the single modules in FIG. **1**, to provide a holder assembly having four card-receiving slots.

As in the embodiment of FIG. **1**, each module of FIG. **3**, or an assembly of a plurality of modules, is supported by a brace **32** which is connected detachably in a variety of positions of adjustment, to accommodate various angles of card display.

The embodiment illustrated in FIG. **4** also is similar to that of FIG. **1** in that each module provides a single card-retaining slot **16**. However, whereas the slot **16** in FIG. **1** is curved throughout its vertical length, the slot in FIG. **4** is curved only in an area intermediate the vertical ends of the front plate **10**. In this intermediate area of curvature the back plate **12** also is curved arcuately adjacent the rearward projection **22**, to provide an elongated arcuate socket **40** for releasable connection of the enlarged, elongated bead end **42** of a support brace **44**. The brace thus is adjustable pivotally in the socket for adjusting the display angle of the holder. An extension sleeve **34'** may be provided on the brace **42**, in the manner and for the same purpose as sleeve **34** previously described.

The card holder of this invention also may be provided in various forms of construction which allow infinite adjustment of display angle of the card-retaining component within its limits of adjustment. Two such forms are illustrated in FIGS. **5–7**.

In FIG. **5** the holder comprises a card-retaining component and a supporting base component. The card-retaining component includes a front plate **50** and an intermediate plate **52** providing between them a front card-retaining slot **54**, and a back plate **56** providing between it and the intermediate plate a back card retaining slot **58**. The bottom ends of the front and intermediate plates are joined by a hollow, partially cylindrical hub **60**. The back plate also is joined to the hub intermediate its ends, with its bottom end terminating inwardly of the hub. A spacer strip **62** is inserted removably in the lower portion of the back slot **58** to terminate the bottom end of the latter vertically above the bottom end of the front slot **54**, whereby to allow cards in the back slot to extend vertically above cards in the front slot.

The supporting base component comprises a base plate **64** having a forward section **66** which is curved arcuately to form a bearing support for the hub **60**. The inner surface of the bearing section is provided with a plurality of circumferentially spaced ribs **68** which engage the hub frictionally to secure the latter in desired positions of rotational adjustment.

The front and rear ends of the base plate are provided with legs **70**, preferably fitted with tips **72** of rubber or other high friction material, to inhibit sliding or other displacement of the unit relative to a table top or other supporting surface.

The card-retaining component is shown in full lines in FIG. **5** in its position of maximum elevation for display of cards, and in broken lines in fully collapsed condition for packaging or storage. The card-retaining component may be adjusted to any of an infinite variety of intermediate positions, as desired.

Further, the card-retaining component may be mounted on the base support in reversed position, i.e., with the cards facing rearwardly rather than forwardly. This is achieved by removing the card-retaining component from the base component, by sliding the cylindrical hub **60** axially out of the bearing section **66** of the base support, then turning the hub end-for-end and inserting it back into the bearing section. This reversed position of installation may be desirable, for instance, when it is desired to conceal the cards from other players.

In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. **6**, the base component is similar to the base component illustrated in FIG. **5**. However, the bearing section **66** supports a hollow, partially cylindrical hub **60** which is formed separately from the card-retaining component. The card-retaining component is similar in construction to the corresponding component illustrated in FIG. **3**. However, it is secured removably to the hub **60** for adjustable support by the base support component, rather than to the brace component of FIG. **3**. To this end, the hollow hub **60** is split longitudinally to provide an elongated opening **80** for reception of the lower end portion of the card-retaining component. A longitudinal rib **82** projects rearward from the lower portion of the intermediate plate **36**, to abut the inner surface of the hollow hub, to prevent upward displacement of the card-retaining component relative to the hub.

The lower end of the card-retaining component is positioned between circumferentially spaced longitudinal ribs projecting inward from the inner surface of the hub. In the position of adjustment illustrated in FIG. **6**, the lower end of the component is retained between the pair of ribs **84** and **86**, to position the component for the display of cards facing forwardly. In FIG. **7** the component has been reversed in the hub, by sliding it axially out of the hub and turning it end-for-end. In this position of adjustment, the lower end of the component is retained between the pair of spaced ribs **86** and **88** and is arranged to support the cards facing rearwardly. Thus, the card-retaining component may be rotated clockwise with the hub to the position illustrated in broken lines in FIG. **7**, to completely conceal the cards from the view of other persons.

In either of the positions of installation shown in full lines in FIGS. **6** and **7**, the holder component may be rotated clockwise with the hub to the fully collapsed positions illustrated in broken lines, for packaging or storage.

The various forms of card holders illustrated in the drawings may be manufactured of various structural materials and by various techniques. The preferred material is synthetic thermoplastic resin and the preferred

technique is the extrusion of such resin to form the card-retaining component in a continuous strip which then is cut to appropriate lengths to provide a plurality of modules which may be interconnected in the manner described. The brace components of FIGS. **1, 3** and **4** and the base components of FIGS. **5** and **6** also may be formed as plastic extrusions, in the same manner.

The card-retaining component may be utilized singly or in assemblies of interconnected modules, as previously explained. Each of the modules of an assembly may be of differently colored plastic or other material for such purposes as distinguishing different suits of playing cards. The length of the card-retaining component may be varied as desired, and the length of the supporting brace or base component may be the same length or shorter than the card-retaining component. For example, the support component may be much shorter than the card-retaining component, with one such support component utilized at the center of the card-retaining component, or a plurality of support components utilized in spaced apart relationship. Further, a single support component may be utilized to interconnect a pair of card-retaining components disposed side by side.

From the foregoing it will be appreciated that the present invention provides a card holder of simplified and economical construction; which supports playing cards, greeting cards and the like frictionally by slight bending of the cards, whereby to afford removal of cards from the holder without displacing the holder or other cards; which accommodates the display of cards at various angles of exposure or concealment; and which is versatile in its use in displaying a wide variety of cards for a wide variety of purposes.

It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various changes may be made in the size, shape, number, type and arrangement of parts described hereinbefore without departing from the spirit of this invention.

Having now described our invention and the manner in which it may be used, we claim:

1. A card holder comprising

a. a plurality of interconnected, vertically curved plates spaced apart to define between adjacent plates a vertically curved card-retaining slot for supporting a card frictionally therein by bending of the card, the interconnected plates forming a card-retaining unit,

b. the unit having a uniform cross section throughout its lateral length, and

c. laterally elongated support means releasably engaging the unit adjustably relative to the lateral length of the unit for supporting the latter in card-displaying position.

2. The card holder of claim **1** wherein the support means comprises a brace member, and socket means on the unit releasably secures the brace member thereto.

3. The card holder of claim **2** wherein the socket means includes a pair of spaced socket members and the brace member includes a connector section having spaced ends receivable releasably in the spaced socket members.

4. The card holder of claim **2** wherein the socket means comprises an elongated recess of arcuate cross section and the brace member includes an elongated arcuate bead portion receivable releasably and pivotally in the recess.

5. The card holder of claim **1** including a cylindrical hub engaging the unit, and bearing means on the support means mounting the hub for rotational adjustment of the unit relative to the support means.

6. The card holder of claim **5** wherein the cylindrical hub is integral with the unit.

7. The card holder of claim **5** wherein the cylindrical hub and unit are connected together detachably.

8. The card holder of claim **1** including a plurality of said card-retaining units arranged one behind another, and connector means on the rearward side of each forward unit for releasably securing thereto the next adjacent rearward unit.

9. The card holder of claim **8** wherein the connector means comprises a first socket member on the rearward side of each forward unit for reception of the bottom end of the next adjacent rearward unit, and a second socket member on said forward unit disposed above the first socket member for reception of the upper end of the front plate of said next adjacent rearward unit.

10. The card holder of claim **1** wherein the plurality of plates of the unit are in excess of two, whereby to define a plurality of card-retaining slots, the bottom end of each rearward slot being disposed vertically above the bottom end of the next adjacent forward slot, and the upper end of each forward plate of a slot-defining pair terminating below the upper end of the associated rearward plate.

11. A card holder comprising

a. a pair of card-retaining units arranged one behind another and each including a plurality of interconnecting, vertically curved plates spaced apart to define between adjacent plates a vertically curved card-retaining slot for supporting a card frictionally therein by bending of the card, the interconnected plates forming a card-retaining unit,

b. connector means on the forward unit for releasably securing the rearward unit to the rearward side of the forward unit, the connector means comprising a first socket member on the rearward side of the forward unit for reception of the bottom end of the rearward unit, and a second socket member on the forward unit disposed above the first socket member for reception of the upper end of the front plate of the rearward unit, and

c. support means engaging one of the units for supporting the holder in card-displaying position.

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